# Project Management and Implementation: A study with reference to International Development Projects in Afghanistan

Final synopsis of the Ph.D. thesis submitted to Mangalore University for the award of the degree of

## Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration

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**Table of contents**


1. Introduction ..... 1
2. Background ..... 3
3. A brief Review of the Literature ..... 5
   3.1. Characteristics of ID Projects ..... 5
   3.2. Critical Success Factors for ID Projects ..... 6
   3.3. International Development Project Failure ..... 8
   3.4. Square Root Framework ..... 11
4. Statement of the Research Problem ..... 12
5. Research Questions ..... 14
6. Objectives of the Study ..... 15
7. Scope of the Study ..... 15
8. Research methodology ..... 15
   8.1. Population and Sampling ..... 16
   8.2. Data Collection Procedure ..... 16
   8.3. Validity and Reliability ..... 18
   8.4. Cronbach's alpha ..... 18
   8.5. Pilot Testing ..... 19
   8.6. Statistical Tools ..... 19
   8.7. Period of the Study ..... 20
9. Major Findings ..... 20
   9.1. Tools and Techniques used in the Management of ID Projects ..... 20
   9.2. Factors causing ID Project Failure ..... 21
   9.3. The Result of Open-ended Question ..... 23
   9.4. The results of EFA on Failure Factors ..... 25
   9.5. Critical Success Factors for International Development Projects ..... 26
   9.6. The results EFA on CSFs ..... 27
   9.7. CSFs in each of the ID projects ..... 29
10. Conclusion ..... 30
11. Recommendations ..... 30
12. Limitations ..... 31
13. Scope for Further Research ..... 32

14. Chapter Scheme ..... 33
15. References ..... 35
16. Papers published ..... 38
17. Papers presented ..... 38
18. Workshops attended ..... 39

## 1. Introduction

*"All of mankind's greatest accomplishments – form building the great pyramids to discovering a cure for polio to putting a man on the moon – began a project"* **(**Gray & Larson, 2018, p. 3).

Projects are especially appropriate ways of organizing highly innovative and experimental ventures, particularly those with high priority in development policy (Rondinelli, 1979). Projects are considered as the basic building blocks of development. The United Nations emphasizing on the importance of the projects, points out that "the kernel of the project concepts lies in its application to other than routine activities of an organization or government agency, for the purpose of special emphasis and action" (UN DESA as cited in Rondinelli, 1979, p. 49).

Most authors agree that a project is a special task that has not been done before, and it is a challenging and unique endeavor (Andersen,1996). Project Management Institute defines a project as a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result (PMBOK Guide, 2017). Gray and Larson (2018) differentiate projects from other routine activities in an organization by explaining its characteristics. Projects have established objectives, defined life span with a beginning and an end, several departments and professionals involved, the intent of doing something that has never been done before, and specific time, cost, and performance requirements (Gray & Larson, 2018).

In an ideal world, a project is to be completed on time and within budget, but in reality, no such thing as a perfect world exists, and the real story narrates otherwise. The project failure rate in some organizations is so high that even it is threatening their existence. A study conducted to find out the success/failure of projects using the project success definition "a project is successful when it produces the desired deliverables within cost and schedule" revealed that 70% of projects were identified as a failure (Boakye, 2015). The project failure rate in developing countries is as high, if not higher, as in developed countries. Developing countries in pursuit of development engage in development projects such as the construction of roads, dams, plants, industries, e-government services, telecommunications, among others (Damoah, 2018). These projects, which are usually

financed by external donors, face several setbacks such as cost and schedule deviations (Aziz, 2013; Ahsan & Gunawan, 2010), scope deviation (Liu et al., 2011), and stakeholders' dissatisfaction (Ahonen & Savolianen, 2010).

In recent years, project management has become an integral part of many organizations. This is because of the varying nature of managing organizations, due to technological innovations and advancement, and also the dynamic competitive global marketplace (Maylor et al., 2006). In the absence of proper and effective project identification, preparation, and implementation, development plans are no more than mere wishes, and developing countries would remain stagnant and regressed.

Projects are claimed to be the cutting edge of development (Gittinger, 1972) and privileged particles of the development process (Hirschman, 1967). One important class of projects is the international development projects implemented in developing countries (Boakye, 2015). International development projects are sponsored and implemented in developing nations with the purpose of poverty alleviation, improving the living standards of the people, and economic development in general. They are becoming a significant means through which foreign aid is used to activate and achieve national and sectoral growth in the developing world. Governments, international lending institutions, and private corporations make use of project management as a means of planning and executing billions of dollars of investment to stimulate economic growth in developing countries (Rondinelli, 1979). ID projects, like any other industrial and conventional type of projects, are not immune to failure. Despite extensive planning processes and substantial management efforts, international development projects are not being left out of this problem of rampant project failure leaving the stakeholders with disappointment (Boakye, 2015).

It is believed that success and failure are two sides of the same coin. If there are factors causing project failure, there are factors crucial to the success of projects as well. This study is two-fold. First, the study explores and evaluates the factor/causes causing ID project failure in the context of Afghanistan. Subsequently, it identifies and evaluates the critical success factors for ID projects in the same context. It further looks into the management and implementation of international development projects as adopted by

major bilateral and multilateral aiding agencies in developing countries. The study will add to the theories of ID project critical success factors and causes of project failure in developing countries; it also contributes to both academics and project management practitioners and ultimately to the project management body of knowledge.

## 2. Background

Socio-economic development in under-developed and developing countries, particularly nations that have experienced decades of civil wars, armed conflicts, and political instability, demands a targeted and deliberate aid by the international community. The existence of a vast tangible drastic difference in the socio-economic, managerial, and political environments in developing nations as compared to those of developed countries has convinced most of the world's governments to place a high priority on development initiatives and interventions. Similarly, international financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations, and their affiliated agencies are allocating a more significant amount of resources to support development activities in developing countries.

Financing and implementing development activities through physical, economic, and social investment projects has long been an integral part of public planning and management in developing countries (Rondinelli, 1979). The majority of development activities are undertaken in the form of projects. Hence, project management has become an essential part of any organization in recent years. Rondinelli (1979) states that since World War II, national governments, international lending institutions, and private corporations make use of project management as means of planning and executing billions of dollars of investment to stimulate economic growth in developing countries.

With the overthrow of the Taliban regime and with the establishment of the interim government in 2001, Afghanistan has gained the attention of the international community in providing humanitarian aid and financial assistance. After more than two decades of armed conflicts and civil unrest, the reconstruction of Afghanistan began in the subsequent years, and thousands of reconstruction and development projects were implemented across different sectors throughout the country. Following the Bonn Conference (Bonn agreement) for the formation of a new government in 2001, the international community,

mainly OECD countries, decided to provide financial aid and take primary steps toward socio-economic development and political stability in Afghanistan. Since then, the international community has remained committed to Afghanistan's development, pledging over $83 billion at ten subsequent donors' conferences between 2003 and 2016. In a recent conference held in Brussels in October 2016, the donors pledged an additional $3.8 billion in development aid from 2017 to 2020 for Afghanistan on an annual basis (World Factbook, 2017).

International development projects are considered pivotal to the overall development of developing countries. Ahsan and Gunawan (2010) define international development projects as those projects which are specifically designed for the socio-economic needs of developing countries and are usually financed by donors. Youker (2003) defines ID projects as a medium to large size public projects or programs in all sectors of developing countries funded by an external donor. Afghanistan has been hosting a large number of ID projects in the last nearly two decades. Though the total number of all ID projects implemented in the country is unknown, there were more than 14000 construction and development ID projects underway in Afghanistan in 2007 alone (Wikipedia).

In the last decade, the US-led international community has given more than USD 100 billion in assistance to stabilize Afghanistan and rebuild its imbalanced economy. (Samim, 2016). There have been some improvements in GDP growth, poverty reduction, education, life expectancy, child and maternal health, and infrastructure; however, these improvements are relatively modest as compared to the sums of dollars poured into the country (Samim, 2016). Almost two decades have passed since the international community announced that it was providing aid to Afghanistan, but still, things do not seem to have significantly improved.

The recent Transparency International (Corruption Perceptions Index, 2019) ranks Afghanistan as the seventh most corrupt nation in the world. Regarding education, though the literacy rate in Afghanistan is reported to be 43% in 2018, a drastic increase from 31.7% in 2000 (World Bank, 2019), still, the quality of education does not meet world standards (Samim, 2016). Health indicators remain below the average for low-income countries with the lowest life expectancy rate and the second-highest maternal mortality rate in the world.

Moreover, the ministry of Economy of Afghanistan reports that almost 90% of the total population lives below the poverty line (Omid, 2020). In addition, less than 67% of the population has access to clean drinking water. Approximately 43% of the population are provided with access to safely managed, and basic service sanitation (WHS/UNICEF JMP,2019), whereas roughly 70% of the population has no access to electricity, the majority of whom are living in rural regions (Amin & Bernell, 2018). Hundreds of billions of civil aids for Afghanistan have failed to keep poverty levels from increasing, provide adequate civilian employment, create major licit exports, and to develop sufficient levels of economic growth and reforms (Cordesman, 2019).

## 3. A brief Review of the Literature

International development projects are specifically designed for the social needs of developing countries and are usually funded by international donors. Youker (2003) defines ID projects as a medium to large size public projects and programs in all sectors of developing countries financed by any of these institutions; multilateral financial institutions (ADB, AfDB, IADB, World Bank, etc.), United Nations Associated Agencies, other inter-governmental agencies (USAID, European Union, CDA), NGOs (CARE, Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services), in developing countries.

### 3.1. Characteristics of ID Projects

It is the characteristics and particularities of the ID projects that distinguish them from other corporate or IT projects. International development projects usually have a variety of interested parties known as stakeholders. One of the most significant characteristics of ID project is the involvement of a vast array of these stakeholders (Youker, 1999; Saad, Cicmil & Greenwood, 2002; Diallo & Thuillier, 2005; Steinfort, 2010), which can directly or indirectly affect the process of project management and implementation to a greater extent.

Moreover, ID projects are characterized by a complex and risky environment (Youker, 1999; Diallo & Thuillier, 2004; Khang & Moe, 2008). The environment for ID projects is far more complex and risky than domestic projects in industrialized countries (Kwak, 2001). There are several internal and external, visible, and invisible factors affecting the

environment that create a high risk in achieving the objectives of the ID project (Kwak, 2001).

The shortage of supplies and scarcity of resources is another characteristic of ID projects (Youker, 1999; Quartey Jnr, 1996; Muriithi & Crawford, 2003). Developing countries are known for the scarcity of resources. There is often a shortage of resources, particularly human resources, and a lack of infrastructure in developing countries (Youker, 1999). This peculiarity will influence the successful implementation of any ID project.

Cultural differences in the ID project is yet another important characteristic. It is the cultural differences that make it challenging to adopt proper project management techniques in the implementation of ID projects (Ahsan & Gunawan, 2010; Muriithi & Crawford, 2003; Crawford & Bryce, 2003; Chan & Raymond, 2003). Culture mostly determines how people and organizations operate on a day-to-day basis, and the different problems that companies face are often due to conflicts that arise from different cultures (Lima & Patah, 2016). Cultural differences can affect all project management activities, but in different ways and at different levels; therefore, it is significant to consider cultural issues to successfully operate in the global marketplace (Kivrak et al., 2009).

Finally, ID projects are characterized by the intangibility of project outputs and the difficulty in defining and measuring them (Khang & Moe, 2008; Steinfort, 2010; Ahsan & Gunawan, 2010). Youker (2003) describes the characteristics of ID projects in terms of their definition, aims, funding, lifecycle, different stakeholders involved, the role of sponsors, and the environment of the host country.

### 3.2. Critical Success Factors for ID Projects

Kerzner (1998) has identified six critical success factors for successful projects namly; corporate understanding of project management, executive commitment to project management, organizational adaptability, project manager selection criteria, project manager leadership style, and commitment to planning and control. Pinto and Prescott (1998) discovered that clearly defined goals, competent project manager, top management support, qualified project team members, sufficient resource allocation, adequate

communication channels, control mechanism, feedback capabilities, and responsiveness to clients are the factors instrumental to project success in the implementation phase.

Lim and Mohamed (1999) classify project success into two categories: the macro and micro project success. The macro viewpoint of project success considers the original project concept, and if that is achieved, the project is successful. On the other hand, the micro view of project success recognizes project achievement in smaller component levels. Clarke (1999) identified four factors critical to the success of projects; communication throughout the project, clear objectives and scope, breaking the project into 'bite-size chunks,' and using project plans as a working document.

White and Fortune (2002) found that three of the four factors respondents identified as critical to project success were; realistic schedules, adequate funds/resources, clear goals/objectives. Similarly, Anderson et al. (2006) found that the most significant factors to deliver results in time and cost were strong project commitments, early stakeholder influence, stakeholder endorsement of project plans, and rich project communications.

Kwak (2002) identified ten factors that influence the success/failure of projects, and they are; political, legal, cultural, managerial, economic, environmental, social, corruption, and physical factors. Khan and Spang (2011) identified some critical success factors and grouped them into four dimensions, i.e., project, people, organization, and national factors. Diallo and Thuillier (2004) explored the relationship between trust and communication and the influence of these factors on project success and success criteria as perceived by project coordinators of international development projects in sub – Saharan Africa. Their analysis confirmed that trust and communication between players are proxy variables. The foremost key success factor was identified as trust between task manager and coordinator, and team cohesion was found to be the second important factor (Diallo & Thuillier,2005).

Ika et al. (2012) identified a set of five critical success factors: monitoring, coordination, design, training, and institutional environment. They further assert that design and monitoring are the most important critical success factors for project supervisors. Hermano et al. (2013) have studied the critical success factors for ID projects and grouped the factors

into four areas; factors related to the project, factors related to the team, factors related to the organizations, and factors associated with the external environment.

Bayiley and Teklu (2016) identified a set of four CSFs: intellectual capital, sound project case, key workforce competency, and active stakeholder engagement. Furthermore, they highlighted five critical success factor variables as a clear policy of donor and recipient government, strong local ownership of the project, effective consultation throughout the planning, high motivation and interest, and compatible rules and procedures. Yalegama et al. (2016) studied critical success factors in community-driven development projects in Sri Lanka, and their study revealed three critical success factors: enabling community environment, measurable project management outcomes by village organization, and community project management engagement. Moreover, Ika and Donnelly (2017) proposed that a high level of multi-stakeholder commitment, collaboration, alignment, and adaptation are necessary for projects to succeed.

Tran (2017) studied critical success factors of international development projects in Vietnam. His work highlights that the two factors – project conditions and partners' capacities do not have a significant impact on project success. On the other hand, he finds that the other two factors, such as a partner's commitment and communication, have a positive impact on project success.

### 3.3. International Development Project Failure

In Strachan's (1978) perspective, ID project failure factors are recurring administrative problems that can be traced back to the "rational" paradigm that guides the development of the aid control system. These recurring problems are long lead times in program development, substantial administrative expenditures, execution delays and hurdles, and leadership passivity and subterfuge. He noted that the reasons for lengthy lead times are mostly the nature of the process of decision making. This generally includes layers of bureaucracy as well as the involvement of a large number of individuals and the efforts being put into planning and evaluation before a project is approved.

One of the most important causes of ID project failure may be attributed to the basis upon which the project is designed and implemented. Designing and implementing ID projects

based on unrealistic and or wrong assumptions may lead to project failure (Givewell,2009). It is argued that ID projects in developing countries are principally undertaken for political reasons and based on political decisions (Rotner, 1970; Shahibzada et al.,1992). There are numerous instances where development projects are initiated in developing countries solely based on political reasons in defiance of economic logic (Rotner, 1970). Rotner (1970), furthermore, stated that inappropriate project designs cause the failure of ID projects. He claims that it is the art of project design that includes a mixture of new and existing characteristics into the project that can be appropriate for the particular government and specific project.

Autonomy is another cause of failure of ID projects (Rotner, 1970). According to him, an extremely autonomous project can submit to foreign domination and thus may not receive the necessary assistance and support from the host state. According to Rondinelli (1970), the barriers and challenges that inhibit overall economic growth and efficient public administration also limit effective project planning, organization, and implementation of ID projects. He states that low administrative capability levels, qualified planners and managers' scarcity, and absence of appropriate physical, financial, or social preconditions make development projects risky from the beginning. Local resource scarcity for project support or maintenance, as well as budgeting and allocation issues, often cause problems even for internationally aided projects.

Rondinelli (1987) writes about the plethora of project management in developing countries and provides a checklist of problems and issues of ID projects as; ineffective project planning and preparation, faulty appraisal and selection processes, defective project design, problems in start-up and activation, poor project execution, operation, and supervision, inadequate or ineffective external coordination of project activities, and deficiencies in dissemination and evaluation of project results and follow-up action.

Shahibzada et al. (1992) provided a plausible explanation of development project failure. According to them, the development projects fail because of ineffective project planning, a factor supported by Agheneza (2009). They stated that the process of project planning and execution suffers from inherent problems. These problems range from conceptual differences about the projects, hurriedly prepared feasibility studies deficient in proper

technical and economic underpinnings, as well as the lack of necessary information obtained through insufficient investigation and surveys to inadequate project monitoring and an almost non-existent in-depth evaluation studies. As a result of this, development projects tend to suffer from weak links between sectoral planning and project identification, between project identification/feasibility and formulation, and between project preparation/project appraisal and project implementation (Shahibzada et al., 1992).

People are the most valuable resource in all developing countries, but owing to severe unemployment and underemployment in these nations, the absence of optimal use of human skills continues to cause ID projects to fail (Palmer 1986). Feedman and Katz (2007) argue that leadership across borders can be another cause of failure of ID projects. Besides adaptation problems, international project leaders face significant development problems as international work at the project level could still be considered as a new territory for those engaged. Project managers, even with several years of experience, acknowledge that they are still learning how to best comprehend and communicate with their international colleagues. The implementation of ID projects in a different country with a distinctive legal and political setting, as well as security constraints, economic conditions, infrastructure limitations and requirements, would further increase the complexity of projects. Therefore, mastering these numerous challenges would be required to reduce ID project failure (Feedman & Katz, 2007). Moreover, geographical distances, language barriers, cross-cultural gaps are typical of the ID project environment, which will further create leadership challenges and more risks that cause ID project failure (Feedman & Katz, 2007). Most of the research indicates that significant cases of ID project failure continue to be people related (Biggs 200).

Hekala (2012) points out that ID projects are inherently at high risks, and there are factors beyond project manager control, even employing project management best practices. He suggests that the two principal causes of project failure are; poor project planning and inadequately skilled project managers. Arifuddin (2016) finds that the top five highest-ranked project failure reasons are; poor planning, poor project design, lack of reliable support and commitment from upper management, poor project management, and dysfunctional decision-making process.

According to Ika (2012), there are three problem areas and four traps that would bring about causes of ID project failure. Structural/contextual, institutional/sustainability, and managerial/organizational problems are the three main problem areas. At the same time, a one-size-fits-all trap, accountability-for-results trap, lack-of-project management-capacity trap, and cultural traps are the factors that can contribute to ID project failures (Ika, 20120).

Eja and Ramegowda (2019) study revealed that poor financial capacity, poor planning and estimation, inaccurate costing and corruption, incompetency and lack of knowledge, poor communication, poor contracting, frequent changes in scope, socio-cultural and political interference, poor leadership and corruption are the factors causing project failure in Nigeria. Similarly, Damoah and Kumi (2018) found out that the top ten most important causes of government project failure in Ghana are; political interference, delays in payment, partisan politics, bureaucracy, corruption, poor supervision, lack project leaders' commitment, poor planning, starting more projects that the government can fund and change in government.

The extant literature has discussed the critical success factors and factors/causes of ID project failure; however, they have been mainly studied from a generic point of view or as individual case studies and in different contexts. Afghanistan has been hosting thousands of development projects in the past two decades. Yet, very little or no research has been carried out on the critical success factors and factors causing project failure in international development projects in the country. In this context, the contribution of this study is to add to the extant literature by exploring and evaluating the critical success factors and the potential factors causing of ID project failure in a developing country like Afghanistan.

### 3.4. Square Root Framework

The study is supported by the Square Root Framework propounded by Roger Atkinson in 1999. For decades, the success/failure of projects has been associated with the price, time, and quality, commonly known as the Iron Triangle. The most basic definition of project success that many practitioners still use is the completion of an activity while meeting the three project constraints, namely cost time and quality.

In an attempt to define what constitutes project failure, Atkinson (1999) propounded a framework called the Square Root Framework. Based on this framework, project failure should go beyond 'The Iron Triangle', and it is not sufficient to judge failure based on cost, time, and quality. He asserts that in order to assess the success/failure of projects, it is required to look into the post-delivery and product phases also. So he adds three more ways in which projects should be assessed. Using the Information System project as an example, Atkinson argues that a project should be evaluated on the Information System, benefits to organizations, and benefits to the stakeholder community besides the 'Iron Triangle.' The framework asserts that in addition to meeting the cost, schedule, and quality requirements, a successful IS project should have maintainability, reliability, validity, and quality usage. Increased profitability, achieving strategic goals, reduction in wastes, and organizational learning as are the benefits that an IS system provides to the organization (Damoah, 2018). On the other hand, benefits to stakeholders include satisfied users, positive social and environmental impact, personal development, professional learning, contractors' profit, capital suppliers, content project team, and economic impact on the surrounding community (Damoah, 2018). Therefore, it is important to study and evaluate the success and failure of ID projects beyond the cost, schedule and scope.

## 4. Statement of the Research Problem

As stated earlier International development projects in developing countries are undertaken with the sole purpose of poverty alleviation, improving the living standards of the people, and economic development in general. To that end, international donors and local governments are trying their best to ensure the success of these projects. Large development assistance organizations, both multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and bilateral government agencies such as USAID, have implemented comprehensive rules and regulations to make sure that the funding they provide is used effectively (Strachan, 1978).

Development projects involve a significant amount of capital outlays by international organizations and governments, and as such, excellent project management practices are essential to achieve value for money projects. Therefore, the significance of good project management practices cannot be ignored by corporate managers and the public sector

because project failure undermines the shareholders' value and can have a significant effect on various stakeholders associated with projects (Damoah, 2015). Nevertheless, studies show that companies and governments around the world are losing substantial amounts of money through projects as a result of project failure.

Research points out that only one out of eight IT projects can fulfill the original time, cost, and quality criteria and are considered as successful (McManus & Wood-Harper, 2008). A recent report by SIGAR to the US Congress reveals that reconstruction projects funded by the US in Afghanistan are failing and costing millions of dollars (SIGAR report, 2015). Another SIGAR report suggests that a significant amount of $ 104 billion investments on relief works in Afghanistan is spent on dubious projects (Pager, 2015). Moreover, a review of all SIGAR inspection reports on USAID reconstruction projects in Afghanistan between 2009 and 2017 indicates that projects have not always been completed in compliance with the requirements and technical specifications (Laber, 2018). Furthermore, an Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) independent rating reports that 39% of World Bank projects failed (Chauvet et al., 2010).

Similarly, a study on 53 development projects administered by the World Bank in Afghanistan reports huge cost and schedule variations (Shafiei & Puttanna, 2018). A recent McKinsey-Devex survey reports that only 36 percent of the respondents in the survey said that most aid projects achieve their intended impact. This suggests that only 36 percent of donor-funded projects are successful, and the remaining 64 percent of international development projects could not meet their established objectives (Hekala, 2012).

The extant literature reveals numerous factors causing ID project failure. However, the most significant factors/causes of project failure are; inappropriate project design and ineffective project planning (Rotner, 1970; Givewell, 2009; Rondinelli, 1970; Shahibzada et al.,1992; Agheneza, 2009; Hekala, 2012; Arifuddin, 2016; Eja & Ramegowda, 2019), poor implementation procedures (Givewell,2009; Rondinelli,1970), lack of skilled human resources (Rondinelli, 1970; Hekala, 2012; Palmer, 1986; Arifuddin, 2016), political decisions and political interference (Rotner, 1970; Shahibzada et al.,1992; Eja & Ramegowda, 2019; Damoah & Kumi, 2018), and low administrative capacity and poor monitoring and supervision (Rondinelli, 1970; Damoah & Kumi, 2018). Similarly, authors

write about different critical success factors for ID projects. Some of the significant critical success factors are : strong multi-stakeholders' commitment to the project (Kerzner, 1998; Anderson et al., 2006; Ika & Donnelly, 2017), clearly defined project goals and objectives (Pinto & Prescott,1998; Clarke, 1999; White & Fortune, 2002) competent project designers, managers and teams (Pinto & Prescott, 1998; Bayiley & Teklu, 2016), management support (Pinto & Prescott,1998; White & Fortune, 2002), adequate resources (Pinto & Prescott,1998; White & Fortune, 2002), proper communications channels and feedback mechanism (Pinto & Prescott,1998; Clarke, 1999; Anderson et al., 2006).

In addition to the above critical success/failure factors listed above, there are other potential problems which, in one way or the other, directly or indirectly, may influence the success/failure of ID projects in developing countries to greater extents. These problems may be economic, political, geographical, socio-cultural, historical, demographic, and environmental (Collier, 2007; Gow & Morss, 1988; Kwak, 2002; Moyo, 2009).

It is understood that the success/failure of ID projects, in addition to the factors mentioned above, would be influenced by the culture, politics, economy, and the environment of the host country, and there has been no consensus among researchers on a specific set of success/failure factors for ID project. Therefore, this study is an effort to explore and evaluate the causes/factors causing ID projects failure and also explore and evaluate the critical success factors for those projects in Afghanistan; a fragile state with the prevalence of conflicts and insurgency, slow economic growth, unstable political systems, and rigid social and cultural settings.

## 5. Research Questions

1. How are the ID projects managed by the bilateral and multilateral funding agencies in developing countries?
2. What are the underlying reasons and causes which may lead to ID project failure in a developing country?
3. What are the critical success factors for ID projects in a developing country?

## 6. Objectives of the Study

- To study tools, techniques, and project management standards adopted by international development community (major bilateral and multilateral funding agencies)
- To examine the unique nature and characteristics of international development projects
- To identify and evaluate the potential factors that cause international development projects to fail and their relative importance in the context of Afghanistan
- To identify and evaluate the critical success factors for international development projects and their relative importance in the context of Afghanistan

## 7. Scope of the Study

The scope of this study entitled "Project Management and Implementation; A study with reference to International Development Projects in Afghanistan" is intended to study the International Development project management practices, including tools and techniques used in the process of ID project management, ID project cycle and project cycle management followed by major funding and ID project implementing agencies. The study is principally conducted to determine the causes of ID project failure and the critical success factors for ID projects in the context of Afghanistan as perceived by ID project senior management, ID project team members, and the general public.

## 8. Research methodology

The research method explains the actual steps followed in the process of research from collecting data to analysis. Method is about how the research is carried. This study uses a survey questionnaire as a data collection method. With the help of structured questionnaires, quantitative data from the target respondents, ID project senior management, ID project team members, and the general public were collected.

### 8.1. Population and Sampling

Three groups of stakeholders – senior management, team members, and the general public were selected to participate in the survey. The first two groups were chosen because they were directly involved in the management and implementation of ID projects throughout the country. Therefore, they were able to provide first-hand and valuable information on success factors and potential causes of project failure.

The general public is the final beneficiaries of the ID projects are, and they are concerned with the impact that the ID projects would have on them. Therefore, the general public possesses knowledge about how the success and failure of such projects affect them. The purpose of including the general public, however, was to find out their perception of the success factors and causes of ID project failure in Afghanistan and not necessarily their expertise and experience in the implementation of ID projects. However, the researcher attempted to distribute questionnaires to those who had worked or were working in the public or any other organizations that had relatively good knowledge of the subject.

The purposive sampling method was used to develop a sample of the research for the present study. In purposive sampling, which belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques, the sample respondents are selected based on their knowledge, experience, and expertise regarding a research subject (Freedman et al., 2007). The sample members who were chosen for the study had a special relationship with the phenomenon under investigation and had relevant and sufficient work experience in the field of project management. Moreover, they were actively involved in the implementation of development projects and also had a good understanding of ID projects in the country.

### 8.2. Data Collection Procedure

Before beginning data collection, an extensive literature review was conducted to identify success factors and causes of failure for ID projects. Based on the review of literature and after consultation with experts (Project Management Professional, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Grants and Procurement specialists working for ID projects in Afghanistan), the questionnaire was designed and developed for the survey. A total of 500 questionnaires (online and printed) were distributed to three categories of respondents, 100

to ID project senior management, 100 to ID project team members, and 300 to the general public to ascertain their perception of the success/failure factors for international development projects in Afghanistan.

Table 1 Questionnaire Response Rate

| Groups | Distributed | Received | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Senior Management | 100 | 39 | 39 |
| Team members | 100 | 60 | 60 |
| Public | 300 | 130 | 43.3 |
| **Total** | **500** | **229** | **45.8** |

Source: survey data

The questionnaire response rate was 39, 60, and 130 for the senior management, team members, and public, respectively. The total response rate was 229, which is about 45.8 percent of the total questionnaires distributed.

A sample of 217 usable and suitable for analysis responses - 38 from senior managers, 55 from the team members, and 124 from the public was considered for the analysis. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section included questions on the demographic information of respondents, the second section included thirty items/statements on the potential causes of ID project failure, and the third section contained 31 items/questions on critical success factors for ID projects. Statements regarding CSFs in each phase of the ID project were included in the last section.

The questionnaire was designed based on three different approaches widely used in creating a survey instrument. These approaches are;

- Adoption of questions used in other questionnaires
- Adaptation of questions used in other questionnaires, and
- Developing your own questions

A five-point Likert scale measured each item/question in the second and third sections of the questionnaire – ‘1’ strongly disagree to ‘5’ strongly agree. And in the last section, statements on SCFs for each phase of the ID project were measured by a five-point importance scale, ‘1’ being not important and ‘5’ extremely important.

### 8.3. Validity and Reliability

Validity addresses the question as to whether a research instrument such as a questionnaire truly measures what was supposed to be measured or whether its scores are meaningful to a participant (Saunders et al., 2016). On the other hand, the reliability of a research instrument refers to its consistency over time. In other words, an instrument's reliability refers to the degree to which it yields consistent results when it has not changed the characteristic being measured.

In this study, in order to reduce bias and to increase the reliability of the findings, the researcher does not make use of specific ID projects or periods. Respondents usually give views that are partisan if they represent the same organization in Afghanistan. Therefore, their opinion about the ID projects, both success and failure factors, would likely reflect their loyalty towards the organization they work for. Moreover, the researcher tried his best to included participants in the survey who are/were associated with the major ID project funding and administrating agencies such as (World Bank, ADB, USAID, DFID, JAICA, etc.).

A pilot study was conducted before the full collection of data was undertaken. It is necessary to pilot test the research instrument once designed. The purpose of such a test is to refine and bring the required changes to the data in the questionnaire so that the respondent will have no problem answering them, and there will be no problem in recording data.

### 8.4. Cronbach's alpha

We used Cronbach's alpha to test the reliability of the research instrument. Cronbach’s alpha is used to measure the reliability of different variables in the questionnaire. It consists of estimates of how much variation in scores of different variables is attributable to chance or random error. As a general rule, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.7 or higher is a fair and sound indication of construct reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

### 8.5. Pilot Testing

Before administering the research instrument for full data collection, it was pilot tested to find out the extent of its reliability. The questionnaire was consisted of three sets of questions. The first set included questions on the causes of ID project failure, and there were 30 statements/items. In the second set, 31 questions on the critical success factors for ID projects were included. And in the last part, there were 18 questions pertaining to success factors in each phase of the project

Table 2 Reliability Statistics for all Items in the Questionnaire

| Dimension | No. of items | Cronbach alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Causes of ID project failure | 30 | 0.924 |
| CSFs for ID projects | 31 | 0.906 |
| CSF for each phase of the project | 18 | 0.933 |

Source: survey data

The results of the analysis revealed that the Cronbach's alpha score for the 30 item failure factors/causes was found to be 0.924. Subsequently, the Cronbach alpha for 31 items critical success factors for ID projects and 18 item questions on success factors for each phase of the project were 0.933 and 0.906, respectively. The results of the analysis revealed that all the Cronbach's alpha are greater than the acceptable threshold of 0.7 and thereby confirm the validity of constructs in the research instrument.

### 8.6. Statistical Tools

The data collected through the research instrument is classified, tabulated, and analyzed with the help of Ms. Excel and SPSS v.25. Statistical tools like Descriptive Statistics, RII (Relative Importance Index) method, Spearman's Correlation, Kendal's Tau, Chi-Square, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (Principal Component Analysis) were used in the process of data analysis. Moreover, charts, figures, and tables were also used for the presentation and interpretation of data.

### 8.7. Period of the Study

The study covers a period of nearly four years, from Feb 2017 to Sep 2020. Fieldwork and primary data collection is carried out between May and September 2019.

## 9. Major Findings

The research findings from the study cover; the project management standards adopted by the major bilateral and multilateral funding agencies in managing ID projects, potential factors causing ID project failure, and critical success factors of ID projects in the context of Afghanistan as perceived by the three groups of respondents.

### 9.1. Tools and Techniques used in the Management of ID Projects

The first study aimed at exploring and understanding the tools, techniques, and standards used in the management of ID projects by the major funding agencies. To carry out this study, we used both primary and secondary data. We reviewed select agency's operations manuals, tool kits, guidelines, and the related literature and also analyzed the data collected through the questionnaire. The study found the following:

The results of the analysis of primary data on the tools and techniques used in the management and implementation of ID projects in the context of Afghanistan revealed the following:

- The majority, 70 to 90% of the respondents, stated that their organizations extensively use the tools: Milestone planning, Gantt diagram/bar charts/project schedule, Logical Framework, Lessons learned, and Organizational Chart in managing ID projects
- About 50 to 70% of the respondents indicated that they extensively use Progress reports, Project closure document, Result chain, Fixed Price Contracts, Feasibility studies, Responsibility matrix, Communication Plan, Project Mission Statement, Monitoring CSFs, WBS, Project Charter, and Cost-benefit analysis.
- Roughly 25 to 50% of the participant stated that they extensively make use of the tools; Scope Management, Cost-plus Contracts, Theory of Change, CPM, PERT, Issue Log, and Earned Value Management while managing ID projects.

In addition, the study revealed that the Logical Framework is the project management standard that is widely used by international development communities. The LF is a standard tool used to help in designing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluation of ID projects worldwide.

The study also found that tools WBS, Gantt Charts, Responsibility Charts, Resource Plan, Economic and Financial Analysis, and Responsibility Matrix are reported as the widely used tools by the international development community. The study further found that each agency prescribes a detailed set of tools and techniques in the form of booklets, toolkits, and guidelines for proper planning, executing, monitoring, and evaluation of their development activities.

### 9.2. Factors causing ID Project Failure

The next study was aimed at identifying and evaluating the potential factors causing ID project failure in the context of Afghanistan. Thirty causes of project failure in developing countries were identified and included in the survey instrument. We applied Descriptive Statistics, Relative Importance Index, Ranks, Correlations, Chi Square, and Exploratory Factor Analysis for the purpose of data analysis. The data were analyzed with the help of MS Excel and SPSS, v.25.

**Five top-ranked Failure Factors**

1. The study found that 'Insecurity' is the most important factor causing ID project failure. Insecurity was ranked by senior management, team members, and the general public as number 2, 1, and 3 with RII index of 0.88, 0.87, and 0.86, respectively. According to the SIGAR report (2019), the Afghan government had control only over 53.8 % of districts, while 12.3 % of the districts were controlled or influenced by insurgents, and about 33.9 % of districts were contested.

2. From the study it was found that 'Corruption' is ranked as the second most significant factor for ID project failure in Afghanistan. Corruption is ranked as number 3, 2, and 1 by senior management, team members, and the general public, with RII score of 0.84, 0.87, and 0.91 respectively. Corruption in Afghanistan is in different forms, institutions, and sectors. And the four sectors which are profoundly

affected by corruption are judicial offices, security institutions, municipal governments, and customs departments (Integrity Watch Afghanistan, 2018).

3. The study further revealed that 'Political Interference' is the fourth important ID project failure factor. Political interference as the causes of ID project failure was ranked as number 1, 9, and 2 with RII of 0.88, 0.81, and 0.87 by senior managers, team members, and the general public respectively. Although ID projects are initiated and funded by bilateral and multilateral organizations, the management of these projects is still influenced by political meddling to greater extents.
4. Ineffective and Poor Monitoring Procedures was found as the fourth most influential factor causing ID project failure in Afghanistan. Senior management, team members, and the general public ranked ineffective and poor monitoring as 5, 3, and 4 with RII of 0.83, 0.86, and 0.85 correspondingly. It is reported that millions of dollars in aid projects were at stake because the donors were unable to monitor the progress of projects effectively.
5. The study found 'Inappropriate Selection of Project Managers' as the fifth important factor leading ID projects to fail. Senior management, team members, and the general public ranked 'Inappropriate Selection of Project Managers' as number 11, 4, and 5, with RII of 0.79, 0.86, and 0.82 respectively. Recruiting unqualified and inexperienced project managers with low administrative capacity is considered as a human factor related causes of ID project failure in developing countries.

**Agreement Analysis**

- The results of Spearman's rank-order correlation tests between Senior Management and Team Members, Team Members and the General Public, and Senior Management and the General Public were found to be 0.86, 0.733, and 0.780, respectively. The results reveal that there is a high level of agreement among the three groups of respondents because all the three coefficients are strong and positive.
- The study found that the computed Kendall's *w* is 0.861, which indicates that there is a high degree of agreement across the three categories of respondents (senior

management, team members, and the general public) on the causes of ID project failure in Afghanistan.

- From the study it was found that the computed Chi-Square value ($x^2 = 74.91$) is greater than the critical value (42.567) with df = 29, n = 30, and $\alpha = 0.05$, so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is an agreement between all the three categories of respondents on the ranking of variables.

All the three tests revealed that the three groups of respondents agree on the factors contributing to the failure of ID projects in the country, and therefore, the findings indicate the true of state of the phenomenon.

### 9.3. The Result of Open-ended Question

The result of the open-ended question on factors causing ID projects failure revealed the following;

- The majority of respondents (18.7%) stated that the significant factor causing failure in the implementation of ID projects in Afghanistan are the insecurity, prevalence of armed conflicts and insurgency in most parts of the country. This finding is supporting the result of RII analysis and subsequent ranking of causes of project failure where insecurity was found as the top overall ranked failure factor.
- 13.4% of respondents indicated that low capacity and ineffective recruitment process is a major cause of ID project failure. Developing countries are characterized by low capacity and scarcity of resources, and Afghanistan is no exception. Lack of and/or low capacity has been a significant concern for the international development community in Afghanistan. Adequate capacity is crucial not only in the successful management and implementation of projects but also in maintaining the sustainability of projects' outcomes and impacts and the change brought about on the target beneficiaries. In addition, ineffective recruitment; selection of wrong individuals for the wrong jobs, lack of proper capacity building and on the job training programs, and as well as assigning unskilled, inexperienced, and unfit persons in the managerial positions based on nepotism and political

interference have contributed to the failure of development projects to greater extents. Therefore, the majority of the respondents considered low capacity and ineffective recruitment as a significant cause of project failure.

- 11.2% of the respondents indicated that corruption is a significant factor contributing to the failure of ID projects in Afghanistan. Corruption has been a big challenge before the international development community and the government of Afghanistan. Corruption in the country happens at all levels. Dharmavarapu (2015) claims that Afghanistan suffers from corruption at all levels, from truck drivers giving *bakhshish* to police officers passing a security checkpoint to people using nepotistic links to well-connected individuals to become judges without having a degree to officials extorting aid from international donors. The most common types of corruption in Afghanistan are petty bribery, position buying, nepotism, offering and asking for preferential treatment, and grand corruption, which usually involves elites on a large scale (Dharmavarapu, 2015). Therefore, the finding confirms the existence of the phenomenon in the country and establishing it as a key factor in the failure of ID projects.
- More than 17% of respondents stated that inadequate project planning and unrealistic project design with unclear goals and objectives is a substantial cause of ID project failure in Afghanistan. Extant literature has emphasized on the critical role of project designers and planners in the success of projects. Inappropriate project design and ineffective project planning have been considered as significant causes of project failure (Rotner, 1970; Rondinelli, 1970; Shahibzada et al., 1992; Agheneza, 2009; Hekala, 2012; Arifuddin, 2016; Eja & Ramegowda, 2019). Therefore, the findings confirm that these factors can be considered as critical factors causing ID project failure in Afghanistan.
- Another 17.9% of respondent indicated that lack of commitment and support to the project, lack of proper monitoring and evaluation, and lack of coordination is significant factors leading to the failure of ID projects. The project teams and stakeholders' commitment and support to the project is key to project success. Furthermore, the lack of proper monitoring and evaluation procedures will lead the projects to fail (Rondinelli, 1976; Damoah & Kumi, 2018). On the other hand,

adequate coordination among project teams will contribute to the success of the project.

In addition, the respondents considered *political instability* and *political interference, poor feasibility studies, poor project leadership, lack of accountability, lack of appropriate communication, and weak procurement systems* as other factors that may cause ID projects failure in Afghanistan. This set of factors as opined by the respondents on the potential factors that cause ID project failure, confirms the fact that the statements on failure factors included in the questionnaire truly reflect the significant causes of ID project failure in the context of Afghanistan.

### 9.4. The results of EFA on Failure Factors

The application of EFA on the failure factors revealed a simple construct comprising of the following five factors.

1. Funding Constraints – This factor included four items; delays in payments, delayed release of funds, inadequate project funding, and cultural and belief systems with a total variance of 20.502 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.728.
2. Ineffective Recruitment – This factor is comprised of six items namely; low capacity, poor recruitment, inappropriate selection of project managers, poor project team formation, weak feasibility studies, and insecurity accounting for 11.6% of total variance with Cronbach's alpha of 0.730.
3. External Forces - The third factor in the construct included four items, namely; corruption, pressure groups, frequent changes in project leadership, and political interference. This factor shares 7.5% of total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70.
4. Project Leadership – This factor includes three items – improper task definition, regulations, and scope changes amidst project implementation with a share of 6.6% variance and 0.67 of Cronbach alpha score.
5. Project Management Practices - The last factor in the construct is Management Practices, which is comprised of four variables such as; ineffective and inadequate monitoring procedures, lack of commitment to the project, weak supervision, and

management practices with a share of 5.3% of the total variance and Cronbach's alpha of 0.68.

The study found that the above factors are the major causes of ID project failure in the context of Afghanistan.

## 9.5. Critical Success Factors for International Development Projects

This study was undertaken to explore, identify, and evaluate CSFs for ID projects in a developing country. Thirty-one CSFs were identified, included in the questionnaire, and considered for the study. The data collected through the research instrument was analyzed with the help of MS. Excel, and SPSS, v. 25. Descriptive statistics, RII, Correlations, Chi-square, and EFA, were also employed to carry out the analysis on CSFs as well.

### Five top-ranked Critical Success Factors

1. From the study it was found that 'Clear defined Goals and Objectives' is ranked as number 1, 1, and 3 CSF by senior management, team members, and the general public, with RII of 0.916, 0.956, and 0.879 respectively. This finding was supported by the literature since vast majority of authors found that 'clearly defined goals and objectives in any project' is crucial to the success of that project.
2. The study found that 'Clearly defined Goals and Objectives for a particular work in the project' is the second most important CSF for ID projects. It is ranked as number 5, 3, and 6 by senior management, teams, and the general public with RII of 0.842, 0.891, and 0.865, respectively.
3. The study revealed that 'Assignment of tasks to the appropriate people' is the third significant CSF for ID projects. The three categories of respondents – senior management, team members, and the general public ranked this factor as number 3, 2, and 9 with an RII score of 0.853, 0.895, and 0.850 correspondingly. Proper delegation of tasks to appropriate individuals within the project team is crucial for the success of projects.
4. The study found 'Discipline regarding time, cost, and quality', as the fourth important CSF with ranking of 2, 6, and 1, and RII of 0.858, 0.865, and 0.895 by senior management, team members, and the general public respectively. The

classical definition of project success is associated with 'Triple Constraints,' cost, schedule and quality. Having discipline regarding these constraints is considered as an important CSF for ID projects.

5. The study further found that 'Defined roles and responsibilities of project staff' is the fifth top ranked CSF. Senior management, team members, and the general public ranked it as number 7, 6, and 2 with an RII score of 0.826, 0.865, and 0.890. Well-defined roles and responsibility for each project team member will help in setting expectations and understanding responsibilities clearly which ultimately lead to the success of projects.

**Agreement analysis on CSFs**

- The result of Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficients found to be 0.80 for Senior Management and Team Members, 0.80 for Team Members and The General Public, and 0.74 for Senior Management and The General Public, respectively. The results indicate that all the three coefficients are strong and positive and hence, there exists an agreement among the three categories of respondents.
- The study found that the computed Kendall's *w* is 0.85 which indicates that there is a high degree of agreement across the three categories (senior management, team members, and general public) on the CSFs for ID projects in Afghanistan.
- The study further found that the computed Chi-Square value ($x^2 = 76.6$) is greater than the critical value (43.773) with df = 30, n = 31 and $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and we can conclude that there is an agreement between all the three categories of respondents on the ranking of variables.

In all the results the Correlations and Chi Square tests revealed that the three groups of respondents agree on CSFs for ID projects in the country, and therefore, the findings indicate the true of state of the phenomenon.

### 9.6. The results EFA on CSFs

The application of EFA on the CSFs for ID projects also revealed a simple construct comprising of the following five factors.

1. Project Cycle Management - is the first factor in the construct on CSFs for ID project that includes six items viz. A model of stages of the project life cycle is needed when managing projects, understanding and applying the project life cycle will contribute towards success, control is necessary to monitor progress and take necessary actions, the project process should be focused on result and delivering outcomes, a contingency plan should be prepared to handle unexpected crises and deviations from the original plan, and the work breakdown structure should be used to select people for the project teams, accounting for 29.083% of the cumulative variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.76.
2. Proper Staffing and Reporting - This Factor encompasses four items, namely – Progress have to be reported efficiently, effectively, and in a timely manner, A formal process for selecting people to work in the project team is needed, Roles and responsibilities of project staff should be defined, and The tasks have to be assigned to the appropriate people. This Factor shares a cumulative variance of 8.96% with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.732.
3. Continuous learning and adopting - The third factor includes four items - Lessons learned from the project should be applied in the implementation, Success should be determined and built into the learning process, Learning and continuous improvement should be a part of projects, and Failure should be determined and built into the learning process. This factor shares a total variance of 0.784 and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.66.
4. Project Management Practice – this factor shares 6.84% variance with three variables – Social gatherings and festivities associated with projects are to be held in the organization, Project ideas/information to be freely shared by all, and Wide project management methods will have a positive effect on an organization and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70.
5. Clear Goals and Objectives – the last factor comprises of two variables – Goals and objectives for a particular work in the project need to be clearly defined, and the Project goals and objectives need to be clearly defined with a contribution of 5.57% variance and Cronbach's alpha of 0.891.

The results of EFA on the Critical Success Factors for ID projects found that the above five Factors are perceived to be the most important CSFs for ID projects in the context of Afghanistan.

### 9.7. CSFs in each of the ID projects

The eighteen CSFs were analyzed and ranked to find out the importance of each factor in the different phases of the project cycle. The results are as follow;

*Conceptualizing phase*

The study found that planning is the most important CSF in the conceptualizing phase of the ID project, followed by a clear understanding of the project environment by funding and implementing agencies, competencies of PM, effective consultation with stakeholders, competencies of project planners, availability of adequate resources, and compatibility of development priorities of the key stakeholders.

*Implementation phase*

In the implementation phase of the ID project, competency of the project management team is ranked as the most important CSF. This is followed by the commitment to project goals and objectives, continuous support of stakeholders, effective consultation with key stakeholders, and compatible rules and procedures for project management.

*Closing phase*

Competency of the project manager is ranked as the number one CSF in the closing phase of ID project. Adequate provision for project closing in the project plan and effective consultation with all stakeholders is the second and third significant CSFs in the closing phase.

*Overall project success*

The study further found that strong local ownership of the project, availability of local capacities, and the existence of clear policies to sustain project results from donors and local government is the most significant CSFs for the overall success of any ID project.

## 10. Conclusion

The study explored and evaluated the failure factors and as well as CSFs for ID projects in the context of Afghanistan. The success and failure factors were identified through extensive literature reviews. These factors were included in the questionnaire after consultations with the project management practitioners and subject matter experts in the field to ensure that they truly reflect the CSFs and failure factors for ID project in the country.

The findings of the study revealed the most significant factors that potentially influence the failure or success of ID projects in a developing country, as perceived by the three groups of respondents participated in the survey. The deteriorating security situations, increasing levels of corruption, political interference in the management of projects, and application of inappropriate project management methods are found to be the crucial factors leading to failure of ID projects. On the other hand, clearly defined goals and objectives for projects and project works, assigning tasks to appropriate people in the projects, discipline regarding cost, time and scope of projects, and clearly defining roles and responsibilities of project staff are found to be the important CSFs for ID projects.

## 11. Recommendations

The implication of the study offers recommendations for international donors, ID project management practitioners, and the host government. The findings of the study would help the international development community and the host government to maximize the likelihood of project success and minimize the chances of failure. They may review the factors identified as critical to the success and failure of ID projects and consider them throughout the project cycle management.

The Afghan government and the international development community should constitute a special committee to oversight the allocation and appropriation of funds to minimize the level of corruption. The Afghan government should set up appropriate measures to curb corruption and nepotism. Moreover, political interference in the management of ID projects, mainly in the designing and implementation phases, should be reduced and minimized. The technocrats and project management professionals are to be allowed to perform their tasks independently.

While designing projects, the project leadership and project designers are expected to define the project goals and objectives clearly. Unrealistic expectations may affect the outcomes of the project and, thereby, the intended impact that the project is supposed to produce will be influenced. Therefore, clear and realistic goals and objectives are crucial to the success of ID projects. Besides, the international development community and their implementing partners should consider the socio-cultural settings of the host country while adopting project management tools, techniques, and management practices. It is also recommended that appropriate monitoring and supervision procedures be followed in the management of ID projects.

The successful implementation of ID projects and the sustainability of their outcomes require adequate capacity in place. Therefore, it is recommended that the local capacity should be enhanced before any developmental activity is undertaken. Moreover, proper recruitment processes should be followed to help in the appropriate selection of PM and strong team formation.

In addition, the timely release of funds by the donor and on-time payments of contractors will help in delivering the project within schedule. The prolonged paperwork processes and bureaucracy in the government offices will result in a late payment to contractors and suppliers, which eventually result in project schedule deviations. It is therefore recommended to donors and the ministry of finance to make the payments on time and ensure the adequate availability of project funding.

Finally, lessons learned during the management and implementation of the previous projects should be documented continuously, and those lessons learned to be adapted in the subsequent interventions. Continuous learning and adapting is key to project success.

## 12. Limitations

Just like in every research study, this research also has several limitations. The limitations of the study are those characteristics of research design and the methodology adopted that have impacted the application or interpretation of the results and findings of the study. This section describes the limitations observed during the conduct of the present study.

The research is limited to the study of ID project management and implementation in the context of Afghanistan. Select major international development agencies (governmental agencies and financial institutions) were considered for the study. Similarly, the survey participants represent these agencies only. Furthermore, the research is focused on identifying and evaluating CSFs for ID projects and factors that cause ID project failure in the same one country context, Afghanistan. The findings of this study, therefore, might not be applicable to ID projects within the contexts of other developing countries.

The primary data for this research was collected with the help of structured questionnaires. Therefore, there was no control over the completion of the questionnaire, as the survey was conducted mostly online. However, efforts were made to ensure that the questionnaire was to be sent to the right respondents. This can result in biased responses that would, in turn, lead to bias in the findings; however, such minimal bias does not affect the overall findings of the study.

Moreover, the sample size considered for the study is minimal due to some obvious reasons (insecurity, the unwillingness of ID project management to participate in the survey, resource constraints, and low response rate). Therefore, the data collected for the study is minimum.

In addition, the number of the respondents from the three categories participated in the survey were not equal, and hence, could affect the mean average of the various statistical calculations made. So, non-parametric tests were used in the analysis of data to minimize the impact of this limitation. These tests can be used even if the samples from each category of respondents are unequal. This limitation, however, does not affect the findings of the study.

## 13. Scope for Further Research

The researcher believes that this study is merely a starting point for undertaking future researches on ID projects in the context of Afghanistan. The review of literature revealed that there have been no related previous studies reported on development projects in Afghanistan so far. Despite the fact that the country has been hosting thousands of ID projects in the past nearly two decades. This research has, therefore contributed to the

literature on project management by exploring critical success factors and failure factors for ID projects in a developing country and addressed many gaps in the literature.

Future studies might, however, possibly concentrate on extending this study by investigating the extent of ID project success and failure and their impact on national development in Afghanistan. In addition, it will be important to see if there are any differences between the sectors or donors regarding the critical success factors and as well as failure factors for international development projects.

This study is principally relying on quantitative data collected through survey method. However, future studies can explore and examine the success and failure factors through qualitative approaches. Besides, the study used the RII method and PCA as the statistical tools for the purpose of analysis in order to answer the research questions and to fulfil the objectives of the study. However, for future studies with different scopes, the researchers might wish to do data analysis with the help of other statistical tools and techniques such CFA, Regression and SEM provided if they desire to test hypotheses and examine causal relationships.

Moreover, this study explored and evaluated critical success factors and failure factors for ID project in the context of Afghanistan. Now further research is encouraged to find out the link and relationship of each individual factor and the success and failure of projects in the country. An empirical studying of the relationship between the ID project success/failure factors through correlation analysis is particularly recommended.

## 14. Chapter Scheme

### Chapter I - Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction and background to the topic. It further presents the need for the study and statement of the research problem, research questions, objectives of the study, research design, limitation of the research, and chapter scheme.

### Chapter II - Review of Literature

This chapter deals with the review of literature on ID projects and project management concepts; ID projects and their types, ID project life cycle, characteristics of ID projects,

the concept of project success, measures of project success and success criteria, Critical Success Factors for ID projects, the concept of project failure, ID project failure, and ID project monitoring and evaluation.

**Chapter III - Research Methods**

This chapter provides an insight into research methods followed in the research process. Research concepts such as; research philosophies and the philosophy adopted, the research approaches and the followed approach, research strategies, and the strategy adopted for the study, the method employed for data collection, and as well as the time horizon applied in the research process is also discussed in this chapter.

**Chapter IV - International Development Projects**

This chapter provides an insight into; overview of ID projects, types of ID projects, characteristics and peculiarity of ID projects, ID project life cycle of (World Bank, Asian Development Bank, JICA, European Commission, and USAID,), and tools and techniques used in the management and implementation of ID projects.

**Chapter V - Analysis of Data and Presentation of Results**

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the primary data collected from the respondent. The data collected through survey on the factors causing ID project failure, Critical Success Factor for ID project in Afghanistan, and Critical Success Factors for each phase of the ID project cycle are analyzed and presented in this chapter.

**Chapter VI - Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion**

In this chapter, findings and discussion, conclusions, and recommendations are presented based on the results of the analysis. Limitations of the research and the scope for further research will also be dealt with in this chapter.

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## 16. Papers published

- Shafiei, N. A. and K. Puttanna (2018), Cost and schedule performance analysis of World Bank international development projects in Afghanistan. *International Journal for Research in Engineering Application and Management*, 4(11), 462-467. ISSN: 2454-9150
- Shafiei, N. A. and K. Puttanna (2019), Causes of international development project failure in Afghanistan. *Think India Journal*, 22(25), 33-51. ISSN: 0971-1260

## 17. Papers presented

- Presented a paper titled "Financing through donor assistance in Afghanistan; an evaluation of international donors' commitments and disbursements" in two-day National Conference held on 14 and 15 September 2018 in the Department of Post

Graduate Studies and Research in Commerce, Mangalore University – Mangalagangothri.

- Presented a paper entitled "An evaluation of World Bank International Development projects in Afghanistan" in two-day International Conference on 'Contemporary Innovations in Industry and Commerce' held on 22nd and 23rd Feb, 2019 in the Department of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Commerce, Mangalore University – Mangalagangothri.
- Presented a paper entitled "Causes of International Development Project failure in Afghanistan" in the national Conference on 'Emerging Trends in Business Management' organized by Department of Business Administration, Mangalore University, held on 30th December, 2019.

**18. Workshops attended**

- Participated in a three-day 'Advanced Excel Workshop' organized by the Department of Business Administration, Mangalore University, on 29th April – 1st May, 2017.
- Participated in "One-week faculty development program – on Enhancing Research Acumen" held on 7th -13th August 2017, organized by ST. Aloysius Institute of Management and Information Technology (AIMIT), Mangalore.
- Attended GIAN course on 'Randomized Control Trials and Non-Experimental Approaches to Program Evaluation and Research Design' held on 23rd to 27th October 2017, organized by the School of Management, NITK, Surathkal.
- Participated in "One-week faculty development program – Unravelling the Research Domain" held on 6th to 11th August 2018, organized by ST. Aloysius College, Post Graduate Department of Business Administration (AIMIT), Mangalore.
- Attended a Tow-day National workshop on 'Technical writing and Publication, Grant Proposals, Funding Agencies and Soft Skills in Scientific Research' held on 10th and 11th January 2019, organized by the Center for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, University of Mysore, Mysore.

- Attended a two-day workshop on "Research Methodology and data analysis using SPSS" held on 8th – 9th April 2019, organized by the Center for Business Analytics, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal.
- Attended two-day national workshop on "Data Analytics using SPSS" held on 26/09/2019 and 27/09/2019 at Mangalore University, conducted by IBM & Nihon Communication Solutions Pvt. Ltd. Bangalore
- Participated in the National Level Webinar, "Insights into Research," held on 4th June 2020, organized by The Yenepoya Institute of Arts, Science, Commerce and Management, Mangalore.
- Participated in the online webinar "Open-source Tools for Data Analysis in Social Sciences" on 31st July 2020, organized by the Department of Commerce, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal.
- Participated in a 3-day International Faculty Development Programme on "Engaging Minds and Empowering Success in Modern Research Era" held on 26th to 28th August 2020, organized by the Department of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Commerce & Department of Commerce and Business Administration, Govinda Dasa College, Surathkal.